

INSTRUCTIONGrouping for Instruction**A. Generally**

Grouping for instruction is intended to assist teachers in the delivery of instruction for students and to provide students with instruction compatible with their learning styles and abilities. The use of multiple criteria is critical to sound teaching and learning decisions on the placement of students.

The following guidelines are designed to ensure consistency in grouping students for instruction.

B. Elementary Schools

1. Heterogeneous grouping will be used to assign students to classrooms at the elementary level. After class placements are determined, classroom teachers may use a variety of strategies to meet the needs of their students. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, differentiated assignments, flexible grouping for specific skills, and cooperative learning methods.
2. Students identified as gifted (Focus) will be assigned to a teacher who has had specific training in gifted education. Focus students will be clustered within one or more classrooms to facilitate differentiated assignments within the classroom and instructional activities with the Focus resource teacher.
3. Students identified as requiring special education services will be assigned to the least restrictive environment as described in their individual education plans. On those occasions when general education is appropriate, the student will be assigned in a manner which accommodates the special needs of the child. Instruction will be coordinated between the general education and special education teachers.
4. An attempt will be made to balance classrooms with regard to gender, race, culture, and socio-economic factors.
5. The principal has the responsibility to approve and monitor the grouping and placement of all students. Final decisions regarding student placement shall be the responsibility of the principal.

INSTRUCTIONGrouping for Instruction (continued)C. Middle Schools

1. Heterogeneous grouping will be used to assign students to teams.
2. At the middle level, guidelines provided in Stafford County's Gifted Education Plan and/or individual special education plans will be used to determine the appropriate placement of students requiring special services to meet their educational needs.
3. Students may be regrouped within a team according to the following criteria:
 - a. student interest or ability in a particular area; e.g., Algebra, foreign language
 - b. need for remediation; e.g., reading instruction, barrier testing reinforcement
 - c. teacher recommendation
 - d. parent request

However, grouping shall not track students; i.e., a student is not to be locked into an entire program of studies based on ability in one area. Classes should be balanced as to gender, race, culture, and socio-economic factors.

4. The principal and guidance counselor have the responsibility to approve and monitor the grouping and placement of all students. Final decisions regarding student placement shall be the responsibility of the principal.

D. High Schools

1. At the high schools, grouping is primarily accomplished through the selection of classes made by students and their parents with appropriate guidance from counselors based on student interests, needs, motivation, performance, and ability. For some courses, teacher recommendation and the meeting of course prerequisites are also factors.
2. Core subjects may be differentiated into several levels according to the difficulty of material. Generally, there are no more than four levels of instruction offered:

INSTRUCTIONGrouping for Instruction (continued)

- a. Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment (weighted credit)
 - b. Honors
 - c. College preparatory
 - d. General
3. Principals, instructional personnel, department chairpersons, counselors, and teachers have the responsibility for monitoring the instructional program to ensure appropriate grouping assignments for all students. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure balanced classes and to prevent tracking of students. Final decisions regarding student placement shall be the responsibility of the principal.

Editor's Note

See also school board policy #6-40.

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